

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,
Building 123
(Quartermaster Stable)
Des Moines
Polk County
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-X

HABS
IOWA
77-DESMO,
24-X-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 123. Quartermaster Stable

This stable barn adhered to standardized building plan 37G in the office of the Quartermaster General. Completed on October 29, 1903, after an expenditure of \$7,754.10, the building had red brick walls joined in running bond with red-pigmented mortar, a slate roof, and a limestone water table foundation. Its dimensions ran 34 feet wide by 116 feet long. Unlike any of the other stables, this gabled building, situated immediately east of Building No. 122, lacked the ridgetop monitor; it instead had four ventilators along its ridge. The roof eaves exhibited ornamental rafter tails. The south side of the building had a double-wide door at ground level with a smaller attic or loft entrance with a segmental arch directly above the door. Four 4-light windows were also on the front, two on either side of the door and loft opening. The north end had three double hung windows at the lower level. At the loft level was an opening like that on the south side, on either side of which was a 4-light single sash window. The east side of the building had a doorway towards the south end, and nineteen single sash windows along the lower level. Two more such windows were at the attic level towards the south end. The east side had sixteen single sash windows at the lower level, with two more at the attic level towards the south end. There was a doorway near the south end. On the west side of the building an I-beam with floral decoration stood atop the entrance to the double door; iron bumpers were at the bottom edges of the entrance. Beneath the eave at either end was a cathead. All the windows had 2-course segmental arches and plain lug sills, as did the loft openings. The ground level doors had plain flat arch openings.

Interior floor space covered 7,096 square feet and was built out as follows:

First floor:

1 room, 28' 1" x 31' 10"
1 box stall, 9' 8" x 10' 2"
27 single stalls, 5' x 10' 2"
2 single stalls, 5' 6" x 10' 2"
1 room, 6' 8" x 10' 2"

Attic:

1 loft, 31' 10" x 113' 10"
1 room, 9' 8" x 10' 2"

Interior construction consisted of boxed wood columns with outside corner molding supporting the upper floor girders. Walls were of plaster on wood lath. At the attic level heavy timber construction utilizing collar beams, moment connection, notched corners, and mortice and tenon cohesion was apparent. Rafters were 2" x 8" at 16 inches on center. Roof sheathing is 1" x 6". The building module is 9 feet 4 inches between columns. A double door of diagonal board panelling at the north end of the attic had 6-light windows in each side. At the southeast corner of the attic was a small room partitioned in beaded tongue and groove horizontal paneling and painted quartermaster gray. A stairway in the south end of the building runs between the lower level and the attic through a makeshift hatch or scuttle improvised from four-panel doors. An enclosed heating plant was on the lower level.

The stable originally had dirt floors long since replaced; the driveways were of brick. Building No. 123 was equipped with electric lighting and sewer and water line connections. Maintenance costs between 1903 and 1922 averaged \$13.45 per year. In 1934 a frost-proof toilet was installed at a cost of \$103.09. By the late 1930s the stable had been converted into a quartermaster shop. A heating plant was apparently added along the inside west wall, as an exterior chimney projected along the west side and extended through the roof.

Other significant changes include the bricking in of a window on the west side and the installation of a door there; the addition of a sliding metal overhead door on the east side; and the alteration of windows on the first level of the north side. In recent years a shed-type vestibule has been added at the north entrance. Building No. 123 was most recently used as a post exchange for army reserve forces at Fort Des Moines. As of 1987 the structure was vacant, although projected for storage use by the 974th Personnel Service Company, U.S. Army Reserve. Its condition was good to excellent.(38)

38. Card for Building No. 123. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box No. 51; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987. QMG Plan No. 37g was not located in NA, Cartographic Archives Division.